

How do we determine whether a WIA youth is in-school or out-of-school?

Definition from Sec. 101(33)

The term “out-of-school youth” means – (A) an eligible youth who is a school dropout; or (B) an eligible youth who has received a secondary school diploma or its equivalent but is basic skills deficient, unemployed, or underemployed.

Clarification of Definition from TEGL 14-00, Change 1, dated 11/19/01

The definition of out-of-school youth is: “all youth except those who are attending any school and have not received a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and except those who are attending post-secondary school and are not basic skills deficient.”

Hint: The determination of whether a youth is in-school or out-of-school is much easier if we first think of youth as belonging to one of five basic categories at the time of registration, as follows:

1. A youth attending secondary (middle or high) school.

This is always an in-school youth.

2. A youth who is a high school dropout.

This is always an out-of-school youth. You need not ask additional questions. Dropout status says it all.

3. A youth who is attending an alternative school.

This is generally an in-school youth because an “alternative school” falls under the Act’s terminology “attending any school.” However, the State and/or local level has the flexibility to further define the term “alternative school” by defining what programs of study might be excluded from the definition. (Examples of such programs could include GED, skills training, or other remedial education programs offered by a community-based organization.) Further definition at the State and/or local level should not be inconsistent with the Act, the regulations, other federal statutes and regulations governing One-Stop partner programs, or State/local education policies. Once this is defined at the State or local level, it may result in youth attending such community-based programs as being classified as out-of-school because the programs such youth are attending do not fall under the State/local definition of “alternative school.”

4. A youth who is a high school graduate (or has attained a GED) attending post-secondary education.

To determine if this youth should be classified as an in-school youth or an out-of-school youth, we must first ascertain if the youth is basic skills deficient. If the answer is yes, this is an out-of-school youth. If the answer is no, this is an in-school youth.

5. A youth who is a high school graduate (or has attained a GED) not attending post-secondary education.

We must first ask: Is this youth basic skills deficient or unemployed or underemployed? If the answer to any one of the three questions is yes, this is an out-of-school youth. If the answer is no to all three questions, then this is an in-school youth by default. (We don’t expect to see many WIA youth participants who, for instance, are fully employed and attending post-secondary education.)